

DES MOINES - U.S. consumers should be able to know at the gas pump where the fuel they are about to put in their vehicle came from before they make a purchase, U.S. Rep. Bruce Braley, D-Iowa, said Monday.

The 1st District congressman is seeking a federal feasibility study on requiring country of origin labeling for fuels. He told members of the Iowa Renewable Fuels Association he plans to introduce "COOL for Fuels" legislation on Tuesday.

"COOL for Fuels is common sense legislation that will create jobs in Iowa, reduce our dependence on foreign oil and continue to move America toward a 21st century economy," he said.

The bill would require the federal Department of Energy to conduct a study and implement its recommendations to ensure American consumers have the ability to decide at the gas pump whether they want to purchase domestic fuel products, such as biofuels produced in Iowa, or gasoline produced in hostile nations with ties to terrorist activities.

"When we fill up our vehicles, there's no existing method for us to know where the fuel we're purchasing comes from and which nations are deriving the economic benefit from that purchase," Braley said.

"When we put food in our bodies or clothes on our backs, we know exactly where those products come from," he said. "Americans should have the same opportunity to vote with their wallets at the gas pump."

The Iowa congressman said he expects the legislation to get strong push back from the petroleum industry but is needed to help efforts to promote more acceptance of U.S.-produced renewable energy alternatives, like ethanol and biofuels, by better-informed American consumers.

America's dependence on foreign oil weakens national security and impacts middle-class families by raising prices for gasoline and groceries or sending hard-earned dollars overseas, he said. Conversely, funding for biofuels research creates U.S. and Iowa jobs in America, noting that every 1 billion gallons of ethanol produced domestically is estimated to create 10,000 to 20,000 jobs.

Braley noted that Saudi Arabia currently produces about 11 percent of America's oil imports, while Nigeria and Venezuela each account for about 10 percent of America's oil imports.

"It simply does not make sense for America to pour billions of dollars each year into the treasuries of these countries, especially when we remember that Saudi Arabia was home to 15 of the 9/11 hijackers and Nigeria was home to the terrorist who tried to blow up flight 253," he said.